



**Cuban Civil Society Support Program  
(CCSSP)**

Contract Number DOT-I-00-03-00009-00

**Monthly Report**

*December 2010*

*Submitted January 5, 2011*

## 1. Country Situation Update

Cuba reasserted its intention of following through with the economic reforms announced in July. Though there is uncertainty and doubt among the population, thousands of hopeful Cuban citizens seeking independence and access to private property approached government offices to apply for licenses to open private businesses. Critics believe these are cosmetic changes enacted to assure the survival of the regime.

During the National Assembly this month, the Minister of Economics, Marino Murillo, and Raul Castro manifested what the whole world already knew: Cuba is on the verge of economic chaos and disaster and important changes need to be implemented in the economy to assure the survival of the country and the government. Both admitted the improvisation, lack of discipline, mismanagement of resources, deficient budgeting, inadequate planning for investment and production, and poor decision making within the Ministry of Economics have sunk Cuba into this crisis. Further, strategic changes are needed to avoid the disappearance of the socialist system in Cuba. Raul Castro even said in the assembly: "We either rectify or sink," which confirms Raul's determination to transform Cuba into a more productive nation with higher economic performance levels, regardless of the fact that this could lead to sharing wealth with private entrepreneurs and granting minor concessions for human rights and freedoms - necessary for a society implementing a market economy.

The United States has endorsed the economic reforms promoting private businesses in Cuba. Assistant Secretary for Western Hemisphere at the Department of State, Arturo Valenzuela, stated these changes are initial steps towards future political and economic changes. However, Congress did not authorize lifting the restrictions for US citizens to travel to the island. The decision was not a surprise and the implementation of reforms on the part of the Cuban government may encourage members of Congress to approve lifting travel restrictions in the future. However, the new configuration of Congress makes this somewhat unlikely. Even so, according to members of Congress and President Obama, Cuba needs to implement political changes to move the island towards democracy.

Some analysts believe Cuba is moving in a direction similar to that taken by other socialist countries such as China and Vietnam in order to improve their economies while ensuring the survival of their political system. The Vietnamese model seems to be appropriate for Raul Castro and it seems as if Cuba is taking steps to implement changes. Once the regime assures its survival, following the initial implementation of economic reforms, it is possible that in the future, democratic changes could be slowly introduced.

The issue of political prisoners remains significant in the international press and websites opposing the regime. Cuba has freed 40 of the 52 members from the Group of 75 who have been in prison since 2003 on charges of conspiracy. The remaining 12 dissidents continue in prison, refusing to abandon the island upon release. Two dissidents, Guillermo Fariñas, the 2010 Sajarov prize winner, and Yoani Sanchez, who won the 2010 Ortega y Gasset award, received awards for their struggle for Human Rights and freedom in their country, though neither could obtain permission from their government to leave the country and receive their awards.



## 2. Programmatic Highlights and Major Activities

### *Program Strategy Restructure:*

- In accordance with OTI guidance program operations have moved to Washington, D.C. and field office close out is complete. Programmatic activities are coordinated and implemented from the field successfully through two full-time consultants under the supervision of the COP. Reviews of the operational set up indicate activities are being implemented well. The program restructure requires a budget realignment and contract modification. The realignment budget was submitted to OTI for review and approval this month.

### *Key Programmatic Accomplishments*

- **Sector CP** - *This innovative sector seeks to counter apathy and stimulate civic engagement by supporting media projects that communicate positive, unbiased messages through different aspects of everyday life and humor. In previous activities under this sector, the CCSSP created a variety of media products and was able to shape the social content of the items produced to promote civic analysis and a sense of duty for the targeted audience.*
- [SJO061] After some struggle to collect final results from grantee, the Final Evaluation was completed. This grant is currently in the process of closing. OTI/CREA staff members are discussing the possibility of re-financing this initiative for future events.
- [SJO065] The grantee has presented the final draft of product and will start the revision and validation process for the final product to be published early 2011. The final process will be completed in two steps: an expert group to revise and edit it and a youth group to validate it with their reactions and ideas, which providing enough information to complete the final version. Several meetings have been held with organizations that may help in the distribution process.
- [SJO068]: Grantee has begun the process to create the first product, which will be ready for testing in January, a platform that will provide useful information and alternative communication routes to beneficiaries on the island.
- [SJO070]: The first products have been completed and the process of distribution and dissemination through internet and social networks has begun. The beneficiaries' reaction will be measured during this period of time in order to analyze the effectiveness of this strategy.
- **Sector CP (2)** - *This sector has exponentially exceeded expectations, and has demonstrated a true desire for freedom of expression and a need for increased networking capacity on the island. Therefore, the CCSSP has allocated significant resources toward achieving further success in this sector.*
- [SJO072]: The grantee is testing the new multidirectional platform to be launched in January and a selected group of users will test the new interface. This product will provide a space for interaction mainly among beneficiary users, as well as between users and the platform.
- **Sector US** - *Through four field research grants the CCSSP found several in-roads for independent action through civic activities in this sector. Partnered with three Latin American NGOs with experience and characteristics similar to the target population, the CCSSP explored the reality of this population group and discovered significant potential for civic initiatives.*

- [SJO066]: This grant is in the process of financial and programmatic close out, and grantee is working to continue planning next steps. The beneficiary group has been contacted on the island and a formation process had been held. This youth group is planning local activities to target young people in their community. The next grant will fulfill the coaching process in leadership and community-based activities, which will be developed during year 3.
- [SJO069]: Two consultants traveled to the island to reconnect with a group within target sector. The consultants reported a successful trip and noted that they held discussions to shift toward an agenda of socially oriented projects. The grantee is working to obtain travel permission for beneficiaries so they may participate in meetings and trainings to enhance their skills in the field. In the meantime, the grantee is finalizing their trip report and designing a Plan B in case the beneficiaries are unable to travel.
- **Other Activities**
  - [SJO071]: The consultants traveled to the island successfully. According to their draft reports, they were able to meet with beneficiaries and review projects. The main purpose of this visit was to verify the citizen participation component for each of the initiatives. Within this initiative, OTI/CREA and NGO staff members are working to improve reporting protocols. A new grant will be issued as a follow on to this activity in mid-January.
  - [SJO073]: OTI/CREA will explore new partnerships with International Organizations currently working on the island, with the main objective to seek collaborative opportunities through common interest areas. Also, the grantee will develop a market study to define the feasibility of implementing a new finance model on the island.

### Program Operations

- Grants cleared to date: 71 (9 in process, 16 completed, 37 closed, 4 cancelled, 5 rejected after clearance)

Status Count				
Pending	Cleared	Completed	Closed	Cancelled / Rejected
1	9	16	37	4 / 10* *5 had been cleared



CLEARED		
1	SJO061	\$41,489.00
2	SJO065	\$42,789.00
3	SJO066	\$20,943.00
4	SJO068	\$75,665.00
5	SJO069	\$61,920.00
6	SJO070	\$28,325.00
7	SJO071	\$55,674.00
8	SJO072	\$231,558.00
9	SJO073	\$24,325.00
<b>Subtotal:</b>		<b>\$582,688.00</b>

COMPLETED		
1	SJO022	\$93,180.00
2	SJO025	\$91,620.00
3	SJO029	\$96,257.00
4	SJO032	\$111,579.00
5	SJO038	\$134,666.00
6	SJO039	\$65,797.00
7	SJO050	\$128,906.00
8	SJO052	\$44,501.00
9	SJO054	\$34,726.00
10	SJO055	\$49,290.00
11	SJO056	\$70,036.00
12	SJO058	\$200,000.00
13	SJO062	\$70,315.00
14	SJO063	\$11,790.00
15	SJO064	\$6,621.00
16	SJO067	\$96,976.00
<b>Subtotal:</b>		<b>\$1,236,224.00</b>

CLOSED		
1	SJO001	\$95,420.00
2	SJO003	\$17,157.00
3	SJO006	\$81,421.00
4	SJO007	\$123,098.00
5	SJO008	\$34,332.00
6	SJO009	\$24,256.00
7	SJO010	\$30,434.00
8	SJO011	\$19,551.00
9	SJO012	\$14,204.00
10	SJO014	\$47,453.00
11	SJO015	\$7,308.00
12	SJO016	\$72,709.00
13	SJO017	\$2,345.00
14	SJO018	\$12,759.00
15	SJO019	\$89,534.00
16	SJO020	\$11,430.00
17	SJO024	\$12,784.00
18	SJO026	\$4,655.00
19	SJO027	\$4,743.00
20	SJO028	\$63,655.00
21	SJO030	\$17,830.00
22	SJO031	\$5,844.00
23	SJO033	\$74,390.00
24	SJO034	\$65,502.00
25	SJO035	\$19,429.00
26	SJO036	\$14,525.00
27	SJO037	\$36,210.00
28	SJO040	\$140,927.00
29	SJO041	\$4,947.00
30	SJO042	\$21,551.00
31	SJO044	\$87,554.00
32	SJO046	\$21,612.00

CLOSED		
33	SJO047	\$29,152.00
34	SJO048	\$4,542.00
35	SJO049	\$90,020.00
36	SJO053	\$12,248.00
37	SJO056	\$70,036.00
38	SJO057	\$4,538.00
<b>Subtotal:</b>		<b>\$1,490,105.00</b>

PENDING		
1	ijcSJO050	
<b>Subtotal:</b>		

CANCELLED		
1	SJO013	\$ 9,857
2	SJO043	\$ 5,972
3	SJO045	\$ 16,707
4	SJO059	\$ 3,300
<b>Subtotal:</b>		<b>\$35,836</b>

REJECTED		
1	iSJO001	
2	iSJO010	
3	iSJO011	
4	<del>SJO002</del>	Rejected After Clearance
5	<del>SJO004</del>	
6	<del>SJO005</del>	
7	<del>SJO021</del>	
8	<del>SJO023</del>	
9	SJO051	Never Approved
10	SJO060	

### Administration and Operations

- **Activity Database (ADa):** A new Activity Database Local Guide was finalized in December. The Database is now fully managed from Washington, DC.
- **Procurement:** End-use verification and grant inventory documentation is complete. The Operational inventory was successfully redistributed to grantees in the field. Documentation will be forwarded to OTI in early January 2011.
- **Finance:** All financial transactions are processed through DC. The two finance consultants remain in San Jose finalizing December transactions and pending close out tasks.
- **Human Resources:** The Operations Manager and Project Director have selected a candidate for the Technical Manager/Grants Manager position, who will begin in early January 2011.

### 3. Budget Information

CLIN	Description	Total	Obligated	Disbursed November 2010	Cumulative Amount Disbursed
001	Operations	\$ 4,887,599		\$ 96,287.27	\$ 3,713,219.56
002	Fixed Fee Operations	\$ 244,380		\$ 4,814.36	\$ 185,660.99
003	Grants	\$ 10,200,000		\$ 176,502.09	\$ 2,623,489.11
004	Fixed Fee on Grants	\$ 204,000		\$ 3,530.04	\$ 52,469.77
	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$ 15,535,979</b>	<b>\$ 9,170,671</b>	<b>\$ 281,133.76</b>	<b>\$ 6,574,839.42</b>

### 4. Problems Encountered: Issues and Proposed Actions

- The CCSSP is in the process of closing out activities in order to de-obligate grant money currently committed and not spent. Uncommitted funds for grants are limited at this point, until this process is completed.

### 5. Upcoming Activities

- CREA has the following activities planned for January 2011:
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  - Finalize close out process of completed grants
  - Obtain approval for budget realignment
  - Trip to the Island for SJO069 implementation; a trip to follow up on traveling process for the beneficiaries and to implement actions regarding Plan B.
  - Trip to the island for implementation of SJO071; though this grant is a FOG, the grantee will travel again to the island, due to the holidays, to meet with community members who couldn't attend the first round of meetings.
  - A new grant to support the group of beneficiaries of SJO039 in a new phase of their work.
  - A new grant to support a Cuban artist with the creation of a communication tool for youth.
  - A new grant supporting a previously identified group, creating alternative media for young Cubans.
  - COP travel to NYC to participate in a conference related to topics of interest for CCSSP.
  - SRS meeting (to be determined).